

English Translation of the Friday Sermon of 11th February 2000 Delivered by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad - Khalifatul Masih IV

It is not your riches nor your children that would confer upon you proximity to Us in degree but those who are faithful and do good works, they shall have a double reward for what they did. They will be sure in lofty mansions.

The Holy Quran. Saba [Sheba]: 38.

The present Sermon is a part of the series of Sermons on duties and obligations. A number of sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and pronouncements of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) elaborate on the subject and give important admonitions.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has instructed that children should be treated with respect and be given a good upbringing:

Anas bin Malik narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *Be kind to your children, and perfect their manners.*¹

Those who treat their children with respect, the children also, when they grow up, respect their parents and respect others also. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that there is no gift better than a good bringing up from a father to his children:

Ayyub bin Musa narrated from his father, from his grandfather, that the Messenger of Allah said: *There is no gift that a father gives his son more virtuous than good manners.*²

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has also said that you should instruct your children to say their prayers from the age of seven. Strictly enforce this habit in them at the age of ten, and at that age, they should sleep in separate beds.³

Prayers are the essence of human life. This is the biggest gift from Islam for mankind. To inculcate a habit for Prayers it is important to begin at a young age. The method taught by the Holy Prophet ﷺ is that you should get the children to say their prayers at the age of seven. Teach them with love and tenderness. The fact is that those who are used to saying their prayers, their children begin to join them in prayers at an age much younger than seven years. Initially, it is only an imitation but a good imitation. By the age of seven, teach them prayers. Between the ages of ten and twelve, be strict with them about saying their prayers. After the age of twelve, strict treatment is no more permitted:

¹ Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Yazid ibn Majah. *Sunan ibn Majah*.

² Abu Isa Muhammad ibn Isa at-Tirmidhi. *Jami at-Tirmidhi*.

³ Abu Dawud Sulayman ibn Ashath. *Sunan Abu Dawud*.

Narrated Umar bin Abi Salama: I was a boy sitting in the lap of Allah's Messenger ﷺ and my hand used to go around the dish while I was eating. So Allah's Messenger ﷺ said to me 'O son! Mention the Name of Allah and eat with your right hand and eat of the dish what is nearer to you'. Since then I have applied those instructions when eating.⁴

It is also a duty of the parents to teach their children the proper eating habits. They should be taught to begin their eating with *Bismillah* (In the name of Allah) and they should take the food from what is in front of them.

When you give your own children love, you should give love to other children also. The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to love his children and showed love to other children also:

Abu Hurayra said: A man came to the Prophet ﷺ with a child which he began to embrace. The Prophet ﷺ asked him 'Do you show mercy towards him?' The man replied 'Yes'. He said 'Allah is more merciful towards you than you are towards this child. He is the Most Merciful of the merciful.'⁵

Narrated Ayesha (Mother of the Believers): I never saw anyone more like the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in respect of gravity, calm deportment, pleasant disposition – [According to Hassan's version: in respect of talk and speech. Hassan did not mention gravity, calm deportment, pleasant disposition] - than Fatimah (may Allah honour her face). When she came to visit him (the Prophet) he got up to (welcome) her, took her by the hand, kissed it and made her sit where he was sitting; and when he went to visit her, she got up to (welcome) him, took him by the hand, kissed it, and made him sit where she was sitting.⁶

It is in the Hadith that Jabir bin Sumurah narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: *That a man should discipline his son is better for him than to have given in charity.*⁷ Children with good upbringing begin a chain of charitable endeavors for generations to come. The act of just giving alms to the poor stops with the giving of the alms, but the proper upbringing of children is a continuing charity. To bring up the children badly or being oblivious to how they are brought up is tantamount to burying the children alive in the spiritual sense:

Narrated Abdullah ibn Abbas: The Prophet ﷺ said: If anyone has a female child, and does not bury her alive, or slight her, or prefer his children (the male ones) to her, Allah will bring him into Paradise. [Uthman did not mention 'male children']⁸.

It was narrated from Suraqah bin Malik that the Prophet ﷺ said: *Shall I not tell you of the best charity? A daughter who comes back to you and has no other breadwinner apart from you.*⁹

⁴ Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

⁵ Bukhari. *Al Adab al-Mufrad*.

⁶ Abu Dawud.

⁷ Tirmidhi.

⁸ Abu Dawud..

⁹ Ibn Majah.

Some people live off the earnings of their daughters and they do not realize that they are hurting their lives.

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) has said that:

You should become righteous and be a model of righteousness and Taqwa (Love and fear of God) for your children. Then make an effort to make them righteous and pray for them for this also.¹⁰

I always remember my friends, children and my wife in my prayers.¹¹

Guidance and upbringing, in essence, is in the hands of God. Nagging incessantly and persisting on a matter beyond reasonable bounds, to prohibit and rebuke children on every little thing, demonstrates that we are, as if, the masters of guidance, and will be able to bring our children on the path that accords with our own will. This is a hidden form of associating partners with God. My community ought to refrain from such a practice.¹²

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¹⁰ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad – The Promised Messiah & Mahdi. 27th September 1905. *Malfuzat: iv.* 444.

¹¹ Ahmad. 21st September 1901. *Malfuzat: ii.* 311.

¹² Ibid, 6th January 1900. *Malfuzat*, 421. English: *Malfuzat: ii.* 182.